

REMARKS

The pending final Office Action addresses claims 1-37 and 39. Claims 1-6, 8-10, 13, 15-29, 31-34, 36, 37, and 39 stand rejected, and claims 11 and 12 are objected to. This amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE).

Claim Amendments

Claims 1 and 37 are amended to clarify that the at least one jaw and the central portion recited in claim 1 and the connector member and the elongate member recited in claim 37 are unitary. No new matter is added.

Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102

(1) French Patent No. 2,816,195 of Taylor

Claims 1-6, 8-10, 13, 15-29, 31-32, 34, 36-37, and 39 are rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by French Patent No. 2,816,195 of Taylor. In Applicants' Amendment and Response filed on December 14, 2006, Applicants argued that Taylor does not teach a device having a jaw (claim 1) or connector member (claim 37) that is *integrally* formed on a central portion (claim 1) or an elongate member (claim 37). In response, the Examiner argues in the Advisory Action that:

The jaw or connector member, 2, of Taylor is integrally formed, i.e. forms an essential part, with the central portion of the cross-piece/connector.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner interpretation of the word "integrally." In order to clarify, Applicants have amended the claims as noted above to recite that a jaw (claim 1) or connector member (claim 37) is *unitary with* a central portion (claim 1) or an elongate member (claim 37). As explained in the previous response, the jaws of Taylor are separate components that removably mate to a central portion and thus are not unitary with the central portion.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 37, as well as claims 2-6, 8-10, 13, 15-29, 31-32, 34, 36, and 39 which depend therefrom, distinguish over Taylor.

(2) U.S. Patent No. 4,611,582 of Duff

Claims 1-2, 5-6, 8, 13, 18-22, 24-29, 31-32, 34, 36-37, and 39 are rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,611,582 of Duff. In Applicants' amendment and response filed on December 14, 2006, Applicants argued that Duff does not teach a device having a jaw (claim 1) or connector member (claim 37) that is *integrally* formed on a central portion (claim 1) or an elongate member (claim 37). The Examiner's response to this argument is similar to the one above with respect to Taylor. As stated above, Applicants have amended the claims to clarify that a jaw (claim 1) or connector member (claim 37) is *unitary with* a central portion (claim 1) or an elongate member (claim 37). As explained in the previous response, Duff discloses jaws that are removably matable to a central portion and are thus not unitary with the central portion.

Accordingly, claims 1 and 37, as well as claims 2, 5, 6, 8, 13, 18-22, 24-29, 31-32, 34, 36, and 39 which depend therefrom, distinguish over Duff.

Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103

(1) French Patent No. 2,816,195 of Taylor

Claim 33 is rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over French Patent No. 2,816,195 of Taylor. As discussed above, independent claim 1 distinguishes over Taylor. Thus, claim 33 is allowable at least because it depends from allowable claim 1.

(2) U.S. Patent No. 4,611,582 of Duff

Claim 33 is rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,611,582 of Duff. As discussed above, independent claim 1 distinguishes over Duff. Thus, claim 33 is allowable at least because it depends from allowable claim 1.

Conclusion

Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney for Applicants if such communication is deemed to expedite prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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